

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE
WASHINGTON STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
February 19 & 20, 2008**

The regular meeting of the Washington State Transportation Commission was called to order at 9 A.M., on February 19, 2008, in Room 1D2 of the Transportation Building in Olympia, Washington.

Commissioners present at the meeting were: Chair Ford, Bob Distler, Elmira Forner, Carol Moser, Dan O'Neal and Dale Stedman.

MINUTES APPROVAL

It was moved by the Commission to approve the meeting minutes from December 11 & 12, 2007, January 22 & 23, 2008 and January 24, 2008 SR 167 HOT Lane Toll Rates Special Meeting as amended. The motion passed unanimously

SR 167 HOT LANES TOLL RATE HEARING

Chair Ford opened the hearing indicating that today is Tuesday, February 19, the time is 9:08 a.m. The Commission will hear public testimony regarding the proposal to amend WAC 468-270. See attached minutes for hearing details and action taken.

REPORT ON OREGON DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION'S ROAD USER FEE PILOT PROGRAM

James Whitty, Manager, Office of Innovative Partnerships and Alternative Funding, Oregon Department of Transportation, provided a presentation on the Road User Fee Pilot Program. In 2001 the Oregon State Legislature mandated the development of a design for revenue collection for Oregon's roads and highways to replace the current system for revenue collection. The Road User Fee Task Force was created to move forward with the development of the revenue design. The gas tax is nearly perfect raising substantial revenue that is easy to pay, collect and administer with minimal evasion, protects privacy and has a minimal burden on business. It will not be so perfect in the future, because of the different types of fuel efficient vehicles on the road there is a disconnection from the highway system and revenue erosion.

The Task Force decide that an electronically collected per mile fee should replace the gas tax. In order to do this there are four steps:

- Data Generation
- Data Upload
- Data management
- Payment

Challenges addressed by the Task Force are start up and operations costs; collection enforcement; integration with current system; seamless transition; system redundancy and ease of use by motoring public. Initially a centralized collection was considered, but would be too costly, whereas collection at the fuel pump will integrate with the current fuel tax with affordable operation, ease of enforcement and will be motorist friendly. The mileage fee concept has two purposes; firstly to create a reliable, broad-based charge to replace fuel as a principal road funding mechanism and will create an electronically collected charge to assist management of road congestion levels. Mileage fees will be charged on miles driven within a certain zone (1. in state 2. out of state 3. local option 4. rush hour). Vehicles will be equipped with a receiver that transmits a GPS signal from the point of sale to a central database. This receiver is not a tracking device and has no data stored within it.

It is presumed that the new system will be phased in, because older vehicles will not be retrofitted due to the expense. Those vehicles will continue to pay the gas tax at the pump and new vehicles will have the device installed prior to sale. Privacy is a very important issue with the public and no data will be transferred except for mileage totals within zones. ODOT has opted to maintain a certain amount of privacy, but still allowing for a minimal ability to audit as well as provide customer validation.

A pilot program took place over a one-year timeframe with 285 vehicles participating. There were two phases and three zones for each test group. The control group paid state gas tax; the VMT group paid 1.2 cents per mile but no state gas tax while the rush hour group paid 10 cents per mile within a congestion zone and .43 cents per mile for regular travel but no state gas tax. The pilot test consisted of on-vehicle device technology, service station technology and data/storage/retrieval technology. There were challenges of system components with the on-vehicle device operation and system operation. The Task Force learned that retaining the gas tax system as the default system allows for evasion of the mileage fee. The cost of auditing is comparable to the gas tax system and by integrating the two systems it allowed them to run simultaneously. Capital, operating and maintenance costs included; POS system software, telecommunications and fine tuning the system at the service stations along with maintenance, cost and replacement of the on-vehicle device. The system is adaptable allowing for higher mileage fee rates during peak periods in defined geographic zones (congestion pricing). Additional uses could be tolling new bridges or roads as well as cordon pricing and managing traffic flow on limited access highways without additional infrastructure. All in all the results were good with more work to be done on vehicle identification and improvements to the cash transaction time. Fundamental lessons learned from the pilot are that retrofitting would be extremely difficult and technical assistance to service stations would be challenging.

A flat rate was used because of its simplicity; primarily the rate structure will be legislatively directed. Depending on the need the rate structure possibilities can be variable, fuel efficiency, vehicle weight, emissions or geographic. To gain public acceptance of the per-mile rate charge direct communication will be necessary. The public must understand the problems with the loss of the gas tax.

In closing he pointed out that it's going to take a lot more clout than what a small state like Oregon has. To get this project moving there needs to be a consortium of small states on board as well as the auto manufacturing industry and fuel distributors.

There are currently three other states interested in the concept and considering implementing pilot projects. Strong support such as the USDOT or the State of California would speed up the process considerably.

Chair Ford suggested that the Commission prepare a “statement of interest” in considering the Vehicle Mileage Tax as a possible integration with the gas tax and tolling in Washington State. Commissioners expressed their support of this suggestion.

Mr. Whitty expressed that ODOT would be happy to work with the Commission on a national position.

SECRETARY’S REPORT

Secretary Hammond explained that Governor Gregoire has asked the Department to develop a strategy for immediate and long-term actions to ensure the state’s ferry communities continue to be served with sustainable and predictable ferry service. She distributed a folio that provides an overview of events since the passage of Initiative 695 and Referendum 51. The ferry system lost the motor vehicle excise tax as a source of dedicated funding in 2000, which represented 22 percent of its operations budget and 39 percent of its capital budget. This funding has never been recovered to pay for system operations, vessel replacement, preservation and terminal improvements, nor to account for the recent unplanned increases in the cost of fuel.

Implementation of the long-term vessel replacement program began in November 2007 when four steel electric class ferries were pulled from service before safety was compromised. The Governor immediately identified funding for replacement vessels and the WSDOT Ferry Division began revisions on its vessel replacement plan. The Governor’s proposed budget will build three 144 –auto ferries to be used systemwide and three smaller ferries that will operate on the Port Townsend/Keystone route. The first 144-auto ferry is expected to be delivered late 2010 and the first 50-auto ferry is expected to be delivered by April 2009.

Currently the Department is working on a terminal improvement plan that will design and build terminal projects that reflect future ridership demands and anticipated levels of service. This plan will be tied to the outcome of the 2007 legislative long-term financial plan study.

Secretary Hammond moved on to share the challenges of snow and ice removal this winter. She explained that this winter has been very severe. It has been coupled with storms over many parts of the state. This year’s avalanche control work at Snoqualmie and Stevens Passes is amongst the most extensive in the history of the Department. The amount of snow and the intensity with which it came down along with the lack of rainfall between events created one of the highest avalanche hazard years on record. At one point Snoqualmie, Stevens and White Passes were all closed at once due to extreme avalanche danger.

Due to the extraordinary winter the snow and ice removal budget is approximately \$4.7 million over budget. There is simply no way for the Department to absorb this increased expenditure or to shift money from other program activities to make it up. Therefore, the Department plans to move forward with a Snow & Ice Supplemental Budget Request of \$6.5 million this year.

The Department is not meeting its performance measures as a result of funding shortages. In 2007 the Department missed 15 targets at the statewide level and 73 at the regional level. If the supplemental budget request does not move forward, performance will continue to fall dramatically, as the Department eliminates the workforce necessary to deliver the program.

Commissioner's expressed their gratitude to the Department's employees for working so hard to keep the highways safe for the traveling public.

In closing Secretary Hammond provided a brief overview of where the current discussion is at on the SR 520 Bridge and the Alaskan Way Viaduct Projects.

FREIGHT AND GOODS TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM UPDATE

Elizabeth Stratton, Freight Policy & Project Manager, Freight Systems Division, WSDOT, explained that the FGTS Classification System has been used since 1995 to designate roads most heavily used by trucks in Washington State. It is basically a snapshot of freight tonnage carried on roadway segments. FGTS is used to designate Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board (FMSIB) grants.

The accuracy of FGTS designations is constrained by the ability to obtain accurate truck counts. It must be supplemented with additional analysis to understand freight needs, impacts and priorities. The Department's Freight Systems Division is working with many stakeholders to propose a comprehensive, systematic, and ongoing state freight data system. The Department is also working with stakeholders and partners to develop a classification scheme for the state's freight corridors to help prioritize improvements.

She provided examples of T1 highways and the amount of tonnage carried on those highways. She noted that in 2007 – miles on the T1's were increased due to new city streets and county roads being added. Others were reclassified to T2's and T3's. Commissioners questioned the different classifications, how they were established and changes that might have occurred. The accuracy of the designation is constrained by the ability to get accurate truck counts, particularly if you talking about obtaining actual versus total counts and estimating count. The Department uses reasonable estimates and a consistent methodology that could be improved if there were additional count locations, especially at the local level. The Department is working with stakeholders and partners to develop a more comprehensive statewide freight data system, which would help with filling the user origin/destination gaps.

FEDERAL ACTIVITY UPDATE

Sheila Babb, Federal Relations Manager, WSDOT, shared that January 15, 2008 the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Commission submitted their recommendations to Congress initiating reauthorization of SAFETEA-LU. Key findings indicated that the federal government should continue to play a strong role in the surface transportation system, but should rethink its priorities and methods of involvement, as well as recognizing that a significant investment will need to be made in the range of about \$200 billion dollars annually to get the transportation system into working order. The Commission also recommended that there should be a significant increase, of up to 40 cents over five years in the federal gas tax, which has not been raised since 1993.

There were also several other recommendations for financing options. Along with the financing recommendations the Commission recommended the consolidation of 108 programs to streamline the process that is currently run by the USDOT into 10 broadly defined programs. They also recommended reducing the average time for project delivery by eliminating redundancies in the NEPA process and streamlining the permitting process. They would also like to see major project delivery go from 13 years to 4 years.

Finally, they suggested the creation of a BRAC – like commission to oversee the development of a national transportation plan and make recommendations to Congress on tax increases and select projects for funding. There were three Commissioners dissenting; Secretary Peters, Maria Cino and Rick Geddes, submitted a minority report to the Commission's findings. Their biggest concerns with the Commission's final recommendations are the continuance of the gas tax as the primary source of revenue for the Highway Trust Fund and the continued goal of federal participation in the system at 40 percent. Secretary Peters and the other Commissioners prefer congestion pricing and tolling to tax the system and that state and local government should play a stronger role in the financing and development of the system.

Chair Ford pointed out that the Commission is considering how it might help the state as it tries to address various groups, and as well articulate to our congressional delegation the need to think about the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Commission's recommendations. There is a need for national participation in things that are truly national in nature.

Ms. Babb pointed out that the Department and congressional delegates from our state will be very active in the reauthorization process.

Commissioners discussed the issues surrounding federal reauthorization and the comparison of continuing the gas tax as a primary source of revenue versus congestion pricing and tolling or the possibilities of other alternatives. Although federal funding for projects is important, maybe the federal government should take a look at Oregon's mileage fee pilot project. Chair Ford emphasized that the Commission should take a position and move forward with indicating its support.

UPDATE ON WASHINGTON STATE FERRIES (WSF) LONG-RANGE PLANNING

Ray Deardorf, Planning Director, WSF Division, WSDOT, provided a progress report on ESHB 2358 Work Plan from the 2007 Legislative session. He explained that the 2006 Long-Range Plan was developed to meet the future needs of the system based on ridership growth and Level of Service standards. The 2008 revised plan must find a balance among three key variables:

- LOS (Level of Service Standards)
- Capital and Operating costs
- Operational and pricing strategies

There is tension among these variables and anything that changes one of them will impact the other two. ESHB 2358 changes the way we plan for future ferry needs.

The focus is on increasing the utilization of current assets before increasing capacity. The paradigm of planned development before ESHB 2358 - WSF would forecast traffic demand, check against LOS standards, and where those standards exceeded it would be a clue as to where capacity needed to be added. That in turn would drive the long-term capital and operating needs of the system. Pre ESHB 2358 WSF would forecast traffic demand, check it against LOS standards, when the standards are exceeded the next step would be to apply either operational and/or pricing strategies, that would result in a revised demand forecast – at least for the peak period or for the period where LOS was measured. LOS standards would be checked against again, and then when standards are exceeded capacity would be added.

One of the key challenges is that there are too many cars during peak travel periods, which is creating pressure to grow the system. The new approach is to use pricing and operational strategies to level demand and increase utilization throughout the day. The key is to increase walk-ons and shift vehicles to other times of the day. When do you know that you've done enough with strategies and it's time to add capacity?

Commissioners discussed their concerns regarding the usage of the word “enough” and when is it in fact time to add capacity? Changing the customer's demand for system use is not going to be easy, because when customers become unsatisfied with services they go to their legislators to seek solutions. Unfortunately, the public does not fully understand the current LOS standards and this new methodology will be more confusing than ever as well as being less user friendly than the current methodology. The key concern with peak pricing is - will it be an incentive for users to change their travel habits?

Pre ESHB 2358 – As demand grows, congestion worsens until the standard suggests increasing capacity. Using the revised LOS standards as the basis for system sizing two alternative standards could include:

WSF has reviewed and refined its methods for ferry ridership forecasting with the participation of a technical team that includes PSRC, WSDOT, JTC Ferry Finance Consultant and the WSF forecast team. The revised forecasts go out to 2030 and will be available by the end of February. Pricing and operational strategies have been evaluated and a log of strategies has been developed in the draft plan. A new framework has been developed for how LOS might be defined to support system sizing needs for the Long-Range Plan. Mr. Deardorf moved on to the key milestones that will occur between now and December 2008 when the Commission adopts the final Long-Range Plan.

Commissioners debated several issues surrounding pricing scenarios. Chair Ford pointed out that WSF should put together pricing scenarios and keep the Commission in the loop as it will use this information in its Ferry Finance Study. Pending legislation and capacity, fare increases and pricing strategies were discussed. The Commission questioned why fiscal data is not available for the system i.e. operations verses revenue. Mr. Deardorf agreed that the lack of current data is very frustrating. Chair Ford pointed out that whatever the path taken the legislature wants a credible plan.

Commissioners discussed the complications of finding a way to support the needs of the ferry system.

Mr. Deardorf wrapped up the presentation explaining that by doing this exercise if we can get to what the system should be and how accessible and affordable the system should be, then we have accomplished a major hurdle.

WASHINGTON STATE COMPREHENSIVE TOLLING STUDY – PART 2 FINAL REPORT

Jeff Buxbaum, Cambridge Systematics Inc., reviewed the Commission's eight proposed policies from Tolling Study I. In 2007 the legislature directed a second Tolling Study requesting that there be a planning grade toll study based on the recommended policies and to consider specific tolling options for SR 520 and I 405 managed lanes.

Taking a step back there are several reasons to consider tolling in Washington State.

- Growth
- Decreasing operational efficiency of existing transportation system
- Declining available funds for transportation
- Increasing costs to deliver and maintain transportation infrastructure
- Tacoma Narrows and SR 167 HOT lanes projects demonstrate tolling is viable in Washington

Along with these considerations there are several intricate issues to be considered; numerous projects in one corridor at the same time; numerous projects and proposals around the Puget Sound Region – relating to equitably applied policy; short term steps that need to fit into a long term vision; most projects involve tolling existing free facilities; use of toll revenue and duration of tolling and pre-construction tolling. WSDOT has received a federal grant to advance public awareness and acceptance of value pricing and associated operational toll concepts from a “user perspective.” There are two current tolling events in Washington State: second span of the Tacoma Narrows Bridge open and tolled and SR 167 HOT lanes to open this spring. There have been intense efforts to address funding of the SR 520 Bridge. A finance plan has been drafted that offers five options including pre-construction tolling options. The Commission has taken a more expansive view of tolling considering the overall transportation system as opposed to project specific financing. To be consistent with two of its eight policies the Commission has taken a fair and equitable position.

Tolling applications for the Lake Washington Corridor, I-5 Corridor in Central Puget Sound, I-405/SR 167 Corridor HOV/Express Toll Lanes and outside of the Central Puget Sound region were evaluated. For further detail on this evaluation you may view the complete presentation at:

http://www.wstc.wa.gov/AgendasMinutes/agendas/2008/Feb19/Feb19_BP8_CompTollingStudyPart2_Pres.pdf

A lot has happened since the first Tolling Study and the eight policy statements are as valid as ever.

Following Tolling Study II the next steps would be to further investigate the dollars and cents of pre-construction tolling, evaluate the private sector to create more value for the money, investigate how other parts of the country have addressed revenue distribution issues, more in-depth feasibility studies of particular projects not being studied by WSDOT or others, further investigation into truck only toll lanes or other freight oriented projects, such as container fees and lastly if the Governor's requested bill related to SR 520 is enacted, to work with WSDOT to accelerate resolution of policy issues.

The Commission discussed tolling SR 520 and the possibility that it may cause traffic diversion to I-90, as well as other parts of the system and create performance issues. It was noted that the Governor's Office has requested, through legislation, a technical analysis to be performed in consideration of possible diversion issues on regional facilities. There are also federal issues that have to be taken into consideration when considering tolling interstates. Public surveys indicate that the public is willing to talk about tolls on SR 520 and I-90, but not so willing to talk about tolling other facilities. The Commission discussed pre-construction tolling of these facilities and the complications that might arise. One consideration would be to set the initial toll rate low and increase gradually to see if diversion occurs. The Commission briefly discussed the topic of tolling interstate highways and how agreeable the federal government would be.

Mr. Buxbaum wrapped up the presentation briefly touching on public/private partnerships and provided an overview of short term, mid term and long term opportunities as well as different tolling applications and potential projects to consider for tolling.

It was moved by Commissioner Forner and seconded by Commissioner Distler to approve the Washington State Comprehensive Tolling Study – Part 2 Final Report. The motion passed unanimously.

SAN JUAN ISLANDS SCENIC BYWAY PROPOSAL

Kathleen Davis, Director, Highways and Local Programs, WSDOT, opened the presentation with introductions of Carrie Sunstrom, State Scenic Byway Coordinator, Highways and Local Programs, WSDOT and Deborah Hopkins, Director, San Juan Islands Visitors Bureau and Dean Moberg, Area Engineer, Federal Highway Administration.

Ms. Sunstrom provided an overview of the Scenic Byway Program explaining that the program is ran through the federal government. She explained that the state of Washington has 27 active scenic byways at present. There are more on the books, but some groups do not meet on a regular basis.

Today's presentation is to present a proposal to designate the San Juan Islands Scenic Byway. A visual rating analysis of the proposed byway proved positive with an average rating of 10.74.

Ms. Hopkins shared that the process began in the fall of 2005 with a vast array of organizations supporting this designation within the islands. The goals for this scenic byway are preservation, conservation and stewardship. It's not about exploitation and millions of visitors and tourists.

It's about protecting the scenic San Juan Islands and its routes through the island. The three main goals are economic development via tourism, education and interpretation for visitors regarding the history and culture and the monetary resources possible through grants in the future. She pointed out that one third of the route is the WSF ferry water route, so as you can imagine the ferry situation is important and of great concern to the islanders. If adopted into law, the San Juan Islands Scenic Byway will be Washington's first marine route. The proposed byway consists of a 30 mile marine route and an 85 mile land route. It begins at the ferry dock in Anacortes (SR 20) and travels through the San Juan Islands to either Friday Harbor on San Juan Island or Orcas Village on Orcas Island.

Mr. Moberg explained that essentially the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) approves grants. He noted that this year's grants will amount to \$40 million. WSDOT has done extremely well with the FHWA grant process. This year the program will focus on the greatest strategic benefits, meeting critical needs, completion of prior approved projects (does not apply to the San Juan designation), ready for obligation and leveraging public/private funds. He expressed that the San Juan Islands Scenic Byway should fair very well.

Commissioner's expressed concern about protecting the scenic view sheds from development. Ms. Sunstrom emphasized that the preservation of scenic view sheds is essentially determined by local groups - some want development where others do not.

It was moved by Commissioner Distler and seconded by Commissioner Stedman to endorse designation of the San Juan Islands Scenic Byway beginning at the Anacortes Ferry Terminal on SR 20 Spur; the designation includes the San Juan Islands and 20 county roads on various islands. A letter will be sent to the Senate and House Transportation Committees indicating the Commission's support of this designation. The motion passed unanimously.

SR 520 PROJECT FINANCING

Ron Paananen, Deputy Administrator, Urban Corridors, WSDOT, explained that the SR 520 Bridge and its structures are vulnerable to earthquakes and windstorms. With over 150,000 people relying on the bridge each day it is a priority to keep the public safe and services and goods moving. The corridor is critical to our state's economy and must be replaced.

Amy Arnis, Assistant Secretary, Strategic Planning and Finance, WSDOT, shared that a finance plan was submitted to the Governor and legislature in January 2008 as required by ESSB 6099. The finance plan evaluates state funding sources identified in the 2007-2009 State Transportation Budget and tolling the SR 520 corridor to fund the SR 520 Bridge Replacement and HOV Project. It was found that a gap exists between the cost of the project and the funding sources available. The finance plan suggests potential revenue sources to narrow the funding gap.

With tolling assumed to be the approach toll revenues would be used to repay the principal and interest on state-issued project funding bonds after covering expenses. The finance plan analyzes different tolling scenarios to see how much revenue could be generated from tolls and how tolling could affect traffic on the bridge and in the surrounding roadways and communities.

Summary of tolling scenario factors

1. Toll rate and traffic diversion. Lower toll rates will encourage more drivers to use SR 520, but will raise less revenue. Higher toll rates will generate increased revenue, but could divert more traffic onto other roads to avoid paying the toll.

2. Toll location. Multiple toll locations could generate more funding. The finance plan examines tolling cross-lake trips only and corridor-wide tolling, between I-5 and I-405, so that both cross-lake trips and shorter trips on both sides of the lake are tolled.

3. Toll exemptions. All finance plan tolling scenarios exempt transit from paying tolls. In some scenarios, carpools carrying three or more people are also exempt when traveling in a HOV lane.

4. Financing options. Revenue financing costs could be higher or lower depending on the type of state bonds that are issued. State bonds backed by the motor vehicle fuel tax fund have lower financing costs and require a 30-year repayment schedule. Alternatively, “non-recourse” bonds backed solely by toll revenues may be issued with a 40-year repayment term, but have higher financing costs.

Ms. Arnis explained that to get to the three toll scenarios the Department looked at a low, medium and high toll rates with common assumptions for all toll scenarios tested.

- Tolls will be collected on the floating bridge
- Tolls will be collected electronically
- Tolls will be collected in both directions
- Toll rates will vary by the time of day and time of week
 - Higher tolls will be paid during peak periods
 - Lower tolls will be paid on weekends
- Public Transit will not pay tolls.

In closing she provided an overview of assumptions and toll policy choices and how those would impact overall project funding.

Commissioners shared various ideas and opinions regarding the tolling and financing scenarios, bonding and the complications of putting I-90 in the tolling mix were briefly discussed.

Mr. Paananen wrapped up the presentation commenting briefly on route diversion possibilities and complications.

To view the 2007 SR 520 Finance Plan please visit:

http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/NR/rdonlyres/EB60EF6F-B282-487A-A527-5A5AB5DBC677/0/SR520_FinancePlan_FINAL_10808.pdf

WSDOT'S THREE-PART STRATEGY TO RELIEVE CONGESTION

David Dye, Chief Operating Officer & Deputy Secretary and Craig Stone, Urban Corridors Administrator, WSDOT provided an overview of the Department's strategy to relieve congestion.

Mr. Dye explained that the Department is doing a lot right now towards adding capacity, operating roadways efficiently and managing demand that can be sustained for a long period of time. The Department is examining ways to modernize I-5 and improve traffic flow with a range of projects that would add lanes where feasible, modify ramps and interchanges, improve signs and transit connections. The Nickel and TPA plans include 392 projects targeting safety, preservation and congestion relief. Thirty one percent of the 2003 Nickel projects are complete, 33 percent are in the build process and 32 percent are in the planning/design stage.

Mr. Stone emphasized that there are challenges before us. Taking the tools of the past and looking at how we can enhance our systems and make them efficient and at the same time managing demand.

Mr. Dye emphasized that the system operates more efficiently with the use of Intelligent Transportation Systems, Incident Response Teams, signal timing, HOV lanes and HOT lanes. As urban areas grow, so does the demand and corresponding congestion. The Department works with multiple modes to manage demand; Commute Trip Reduction, Transit options, Vanpools, planning with cities and towns, Park and Ride lots and Bike lanes and pedestrian access. There's a lot more that needs to be done to tackle congestion as population grows in Washington State. Looking ahead at congestion it's more than bottlenecks that cause congestion, there are other factors such as traffic incidents, bad weather, work zones, special events and poor signal timing. Maximizing throughput requires making lanes more efficient with constraints. Each major corridor requires balanced solutions in order to strategically add capacity, operate efficiently and manage the demand. The Department has taken a worst first approach with long-range improvements and chokepoint projects. An example is I-5 pavement reconstruction projects that will remove and replace the original deteriorating concrete. I-5 is a series of long standing bottlenecks caused by lanes that disappear with closely spaced ramps and high volumes.

Mr. Stone shared information on the Lake Washington Urban Partnership. Partnering with the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration WSDOT, PSRC and King County are looking at creative financing and technology to reduce congestion. To view the Urban Partnership Grant Update please visit: http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/NR/rdonlyres/55E4441A-D5C8-43B3-97A6-202F92145291/0/11607UrbanPartnershipUpdate_Stone.pdf

Mr. Dye moved on to discuss how tolling offers potential benefits to keep traffic and the economy moving. Washington's policy goals include preservation, safety, mobility, reliability and stewardship. The success of WSDOT's congestion relief strategy depends on meeting each of the goals. By studying transportation innovations around the world and working to implement technologies such as active traffic management to ease congestion today and sustain added capacity into the future.

Commissioners asked questions regarding currently funded I-90 safety and mobility projects. It was suggested that the Department needs to get the word out about its policy goals and the steps that have been taken moving forward. Mr. Dye responded briefly to Commissioner

questions on the Eastside Rail Projects.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Randy Boss, citizen, shared that he feels the solution to transportation woes in the state is to open up the Transportation Innovation Partnership Program to private entities and allow them to produce traffic connectors for citizens using toll revenue. He emphasized that TIP in conjunction with tolls would open up opportunities. He referred to written comments that he made regarding the Commission's Facility Naming Policy urging that the Commission include geographical language to its naming policy rather than individual names. He also noted that naming of ferries should be included in the naming policy. He noted that legislative direction to name a facility should also be advertised and require public hearings in the affected community. He moved on to share comments regarding defining the duties of the Citizens Advisory Committee and renegotiation of the TransCore contract. He also complained that Good To Go transponders could not be used on SR 167 because there is no way to turn it off and that there would be no way to separate revenues from the bridge and the SR 167 HOT Lanes.

Chair Ford explained that Mr. Boss does not have all of the facts regarding transponder shields and the TransCore contract.

Don Williams, citizen, submitted written comment sharing his suggestions regarding the Commission's Facility naming/renaming policy amendment. He recommended that the Commission hold public hearings in the affected area, give prior notice and that the Commission consider naming other than after individuals or groups i.e. historical or geographical significance should be considered.

The Commission held discussion regarding the Commission's authority to name ferries requesting that Commission staff further investigate its authority.

COMMISSION BUSINESS

Facility Naming Policy Amendment

Reema Griffith, Executive Director, WSTC, presented Commissioners with a revised Facility Naming Policy for review and approval.

It was moved by Commissioner Distler and seconded by Commissioner Moser to approve the Commission's amended policy statement for naming or renaming state transportation facilities. The motion passed unanimously.

Expectations of TNB Citizen Advisory Committee

Ms. Griffith presented the Commission with a draft of the Roles and Expectations for the Tacoma Narrows Bridge Citizen Advisory Committee. This document outlines the CAC's statutory charge and role and the Commission's expectations. Essentially the expectations are that the CAC provide toll advisement to the Commission for the TNB tolls.

- Formulate toll recommendations and review all TNB costs that are paid directly out of toll revenue.
- Review quarterly revenue forecast data for consideration of formulating toll recommendations.

- Provide toll recommendations to the Commission in a timely manner complementary to the Commission's toll setting schedule for the TNB.
- Review changes in the toll rates as proposed by the Commission and provide timely input and recommendations as needed.
- Hold public meetings and consider public input in formulating toll rates.
- Forward to the Commission any TNB policy or operational concerns and provide input as appropriate.

It was moved by Commissioner Forner and seconded by Commissioner O'Neal to adopt the Tacoma Narrows Bridge Citizen Advisory Committee Role and Expectations. The motion passed unanimously.

SR 167 HOT Lanes workshops/open houses

The Commission held a brief discussion regarding holding open houses in impacted areas in order to provide a public forum and disseminate information. It was suggested perhaps cities could participate along with WSDOT and the Commission to get the word out to the public.

AASHTO Committee on boards and commissions

It was suggested that perhaps the Commission should participate in the AASHTO subcommittee on Boards and Commissions. Commission staff was directed to find out further information on this subcommittee.

Legislative Update

Paul Parker, Senior Policy Analyst, WSTC, provided a legislative status update.

Commissioner's discussed their role and the legislatures in reviewing various ferry issues.

The Commission meeting adjourned at 5 p.m., on February 20, 2008.

WASHINGTON STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

DICK FORD, Chair

ELMIRA FORNER, Vice-Chair

ABSENT

PHILIP A. PARKER, Member

CAROL MOSER, Member

DAN O'NEAL, Member

ROBERT S. DISTLER, Member

DALE STEDMAN, Member

PAULA HAMMOND, Ex-Officio Member
Secretary of Transportation

JENNIFER ZIEGLER, Governor's Office

ATTEST:

REEMA GRIFFITH, Executive Director

DATE OF APPROVAL